

ARMS A-76 LESSONS LEARNED

Steering Group

- Establish the steering group at the time of nomination to immediately provide guidance and decision making capability. The A-76 process should start immediately to have time for completion within established time limits.
- Civilian Personnel and MS should start "banking" vacancies up to 1 year in advance of a possible Reduction in Force (RIF).
- Manpower should brief the steering group on the overall A76 process, how it works, and what the objectives are as described in the Air Force Commercial Activities Program Instruction (AFCAPI, soon to be AFI 38-203). The briefing will consist of handouts on member's responsibilities, a timeline of when member actions are to take place, and a slide presentation on the A76 process. Future briefings should also be given to the Source Selection Evaluation Team (SSET) team, and the Source Selection Authority (SSA). The SSET is responsible for reviewing and rating (if it's a competitive source selection) the contractor's proposal. The SSET Chairperson serves as the "Team Leader" for the team. Selection of this person depends on who the SSA is. The SSA is the individual responsible for the source selection. On a competitive acquisition where there is two or more contractors competing for the contract, the SSA is the one the Source Selection Evaluation Team, with the Contracting Officer, briefs concerning the proposal evaluation and the apparent successful offeror. This individual has to remain impartial and cannot be part of the proposal evaluation team. In most cases it is a Lt. Col. or above or a high ranking GS official. It really depends on the estimated dollar amount of the acquisition.
- Ensure all members of the steering group are fully aware of their responsibilities as outlined in Chapter 8 of AFCAPI (AFI 38-203) and held accountable to complete them. Ensure that members understand steering group meetings are MANDATORY. Ensure that outside help discusses all differences with steering group chairman. Ex. Independent facilitator had different ideas about contract administrators (CA) that did not agree with the AFCAPI (AFI 38-203) or guidance from Air Staff. Ensure that steering group members understand if there are differences of opinion it's their responsibility to get clarification from their Air Staff counter-part.
- Ensure Steering Group members realize that this is their primary duty until the study is completed. The steering group reports results to the AFPC CC and in the future the Installation's Performance Management Council.
- Experienced personnel from all parties involved in the A-76 process (Contracting Civilian Personnel, Financial Management and Manpower) are critical. Contracting is a major driving force in the process. During the ARMS study, several times manpower requested assistance from contracting to clarify issues (ex Contractor transition plan, Security clearances, issued of revisions to steering group, cancel original solicitation when it went National Institute for the Severely Handicapped/Blind (NISH/NIB), etc). Civilian Personnel ensures employees are cared for, and FM ensures complete validation of workload is performed, and supplies the money to fund the contract and pay for the authorizations. Good two-way communication is needed between the steering group and these agencies. Because of steering group member's inexperience, manpower had to ask for assistance numerous times through AF XPM or AFMIA.
- Ensure all civilian personnel matters are covered in the time and sequence required. The Civilian Personnel Flight (CPF) has a significant role in the A-76 process. Their role could seriously hamper the successful completion of the study if not performed. Some of their responsibilities are participating in the Most Efficient Organization (MEO) development, to ensure Voluntary Early Retirement Authority/Voluntary Separation Incentive Pay (VERA/VSIP) actions are completed, Union Notification/Negotiation, the RIF process, Placement of employees, and civilian Fill actions.

- Have all primary and alternate team members and steering group members trained in the A76 process. Training in the individual processes is recommended and can be accomplished by scheduling individuals through the wing manpower office. It is highly recommended members attend the AFMIA A76 Functional course and if possible the Maxwell AFB Competitive Sourcing and Privatization for Personnelist courses if possible to get a complete understanding of the A-76 process. If training is not available, the manpower office should brief the individuals on their tasks and when they are to be completed.
- Have a well thought out and coordinated milestone chart available for everyone at the start of future studies. This will help keep everyone informed on what is needed and when, along with individual responsibilities for people not fully educated in the Competitive Sourcing and Privatization (CS&P) process.
- Ensure every required product is known up front (Performance Work Statement - PWS now called the Statement of Work), Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan - QASP, Acquisition Strategy Panel (ASP), Technical Performance Plan - TPP, etc.) The timeline will help member's awareness. Ensure the committee head is designated with full responsibility for the accomplishment of the products.
- Secure a permanent meeting place with essential resources, i.e. computer, overhead projector, etc for the entire study. This is critical. This will allow scheduling of last minute meetings without having to resolve conflicts on where to meet. It will also allow many different types of media tools to do the job better and faster.
- Keep all changes to documentation current and distributed to the correct people. Recommend the steering group keep a log on all changes so they can ensure changes are implemented. This will allow everyone to know if they have the latest changes, and reduce additional work and confusion when the final product is developed. An example of this is Contracting had trouble keeping the solicitation current with the PWS changes and had to amend the solicitation causing delay in the proposed due date.
- Keep all members informed. Maintain open lines of communication with all participating members. All actions should be coordinated as a team by each member involved and the steering group.
- Resolve any external issues early such as possible grouping of initiatives, changing announced candidates, addressing NISH/NIB possibilities, and funding initiative. Also include making sure all in-house coordination is completed before sending the final PWS to contracting for solicitation release.
- Recommend notifying NISH/NIB and Small Business at the start. Their interest determines a direct conversion or full cost comparison. This will save valuable time and effort for everyone. Make sure if study is announced as full cost comparison and solicitation issued, that such solicitation is canceled and new solicitation issued if the study changes to NISH/NIB.
- Pick members who will be in place for the entire process. Ensure team members are not scheduled for Temporary Duty (TDY) or other duties. Most of our team members were replaced during the study. We had problems answering why certain decisions were made, why they occurred and who decided the action to take after involved members were gone.
- Acquire any additional outside training needed to perform your task. Example: Our independent reviewer found out he originally missed information after he received outside training by AETC FM. This allowed him to perform a more thorough review.
- Develop a WEB page to post information on so there's additional access for people who may be interested in the study, and/or studies progress, or anything else.
- Contracting requires the government cost estimate early in the game. The dollar amount will drive the selection of the SSA.
- Ensure all study CS&P positions are identified to come off the books as of the contract start date. What AFPC learned of the ARMS CS&P numbers, AFPC tried to combine positions with DORN. By the time our contract start date came, 7 CS&P positions from ARMS came off the books as

DORN and we did not get credit. AFPC had to turn in 7 extra positions to give us the total amount of authorizations to fund the contract.

- As soon as a candidate appears to change from a cost comparison to a direct conversion get Air Staff approval to change the study. Once this is done change the RSC coding to reflect the correct status. AFPC waited until Goodwill turned in their bid to change the ARMS status giving Air Staff short notice to approve the change.

PWS Development

- Have a trained independent facilitator available for all meetings and development areas to keep teams and committees from becoming bogged down.
- Keep teams on schedule with the agreed milestones. Good facilitation is critical to keep the team members focus.
- Alert the steering group of problems early so critical tasks can remain on schedule.
- Have development teams primary and alternate members attend AFMIA courses for their part of the process, such as PWS and MEO development when selected. This will give the players the right training at the right time so they can do their part successfully.
- When the outsourced work involves the use of computer systems and LAN access, there needs to be coordination with 12 SFS and the AFPC SFS to make sure the PWS has the proper regulations and guidance.

MEO Development

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Funding Requirements

- Never make promises before a complete review is done. An issue came up on the number of Quality Assurance Personnel (now known as Contract Administrators, CA) needed for the contract. Due to previous promises, CAs were decided on and the employees selected passed on taking certain civilian personnel incentives such as VSIP/VERA and placement actions that could not be reversed.
- Ensure Financial Management is fully responsible for the funding the entire initiative, from the planning AF FORM 9, VERA/VSIP funding, to the award AF FORM 9. Have a firm idea on contract funding early.

Pricing MEO

- AFI 38-203, Table 12-6 is used to determine CAs using the number of full time employees in the study. These are awarded from HQ USAF/XP after contract award. We had to put CA positions on the books temporarily before XP awarded authorizations to allow Civilian Personnel actions to be completed for the selected CAs.

Transition Plan

- Develop an agreement early with offices gaining displaced employees so they do not take them from the work area until contract start date. We had trouble with gaining organizations wanting their employees before contract award, leaving the original work center short handed or the functional using valuable time answering why the employee could not be released.
- Quality Assurance Evaluator course thought a waiver could be used to continue writing a PWS under the AFI 64-108 provisions instead of by the new Performance Based Service Contracts based on AFI 63-124, FAR part 7, and the AFCAPI. FAR Part 7, para 7.34(a) requires a Performance Based PWS for cost comparisons. AFI 38-203 (AF Commercial Activities Program Instruction, para 9.2.1.3.) requires it. Under the new rules the contractor felt the PWS was not detailed enough to be used by a contractor. The PWS was written to explain what needs to be accomplished not how it is to be done, as taught in PWS development.
- Recommend if there is an issue involved in the use of a Government vehicle, transportation needs to be included in the PWS development and coordination. Confusion on vehicle usage arose when the contractor was told something totally different from what the steering group committee was told and decided on.
- Finish all contract issues to ensure a contract is awarded 6 months before contract start date due to Civilian personnel VSIP actions. An award decision was not made at the 6-month period. This nearly denied the employees this option.
- Ensure PWS steps involving outside agencies works before contract award. We found internal steps for National Agency Checks, Vehicle Passes, Building passes, LAN access, etc. would be handled by the AFPC Security Manager instead of by the main base Security Forces as was listed in the PWS. Make sure this information is reflected in the PWS.
- Nomination for CAs and Functional Area Chief (FAC) training needs to be done NLT 90 days before the contract starts. New Air Force Instruction (AFI) states the commander must be the FAC but since our contract was awarded under AFMAN 64-108 the FAC can designate this responsibility to another individual.
- Stay on top of the public announcement. After submitting announcement package no action was taken for over a week until our office inquired on when the announcement would be done.

Contract Award

- Keep all correspondence and information concerning the study (i.e. Email traffic) for ?After Action? inputs and historical reference.
- Training of contractors prior to contract start as a partnership initiative led to miscommunication, additional questions, and problems that would not have arose if they started on the contract start date. It created uneasiness in the work center and confusion in who employees took orders from since some had jobs with the contractor after contract start date.